



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Pakistan desires a peaceful Afghanistan: NA Speaker Asad Qaiser

NAB's effective prevention lauded, says Justice Javed

New Sri Lankan envoy arrives in Islamabad



Briefs

Fake Pak currency recovered from Indian diplomat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The security officers on Tuesday confiscated fake Pakistani currency from an official of Indian High Commission during investigation of a hit and run case in Islamabad. According to details, the police seized fake 10,000 Pakistani rupees from Indian official Silvades Paul. Earlier, Islamabad police had briefly arrested two officials of the Indian High Commission Silvades Paul and Dawamu Brahamu in a hit and run incident but released them due to their diplomatic immunity. The officials had tried to escape from the scene after hitting a man on road but they were taken into custody, the security personnel stated. The police had booked them over charges of negligence, reckless driving and over speeding with Secretariat Police Station.

Punjab to restart anti polio drive

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab government has announced to restart anti-polio vaccination campaign across the province despite the COVID-19 outbreak. According to details, the provincial government has started preparations to launch anti-polio drive in Punjab in the second week of July. In this connection, the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the anti-polio campaign has been finalised, while polio campaign workers will be given training before the start of an anti-polio drive, a private news channel reported.

UN to help feed Libyan refugees

TRIPOLI: The UN refugee agency and the World Food Programme announced Tuesday a joint initiative to feed up to 10,000 refugees and asylum seekers trapped in war-torn Libya amid the coronavirus pandemic. "The partnership was launched in recognition of the severe socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Libya as well as the effects of the ongoing conflict," UNHCR and WFP said in a statement. The first distribution of food began on Monday in the Sarraj neighbourhood of Tripoli. - APP

Three Indian soldiers killed in Ladakh

Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Indian troops crossed the border line twice

DNA

NEW DELHI: Three Indian soldiers were killed in a "violent face-off" on the Chinese border on Tuesday, according to the Indian army. Indian authorities said that there were "casualties on both sides", but Beijing did not mention of any deaths and called out India for the incident. "A violent face-off took place yesterday [Monday] night with casualties on both sides. The loss of lives on the Indian side includes an officer and two

soldiers," an Indian army spokesman said in a statement. An Indian army officer based in the region told that there had been no shooting and that the officer killed had been a colonel. "There was no firing. No firearms were used. It was violent hand-to-hand scuffles," the officer said on condition of anonymity. "Senior military officials of the two sides are currently meeting at the venue to de-escalate the situation." Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Indian troops crossed the border

line twice on Monday, "provoking and attacking Chinese personnel, resulting in serious physical confrontation between border forces on the two sides". Beijing has lodged "strong protests and solemn representations" to Delhi, he said. "We once again solemnly ask the Indian side to follow our consensus, strictly regulate its front-line troops and do not cross the line, do not stir up troubles or make unilateral moves that may complicate matters," Press Trust of India quoted Lijian as saying.



ISLAMABAD: China on Tuesday donated 6th batch of anti COVID 19 medical supplies to Pakistan. Chinese ambassador Yao Jing and others pose for photo on the occasion. - DNA

Services chiefs briefed on security

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Nadeem Raza, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Zafar Mehmood Abbasi and Chief of Air Staff (CAS) Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan visited HQs ISI. Lieutenant General Faiz Hamid, DG ISI received the CJCS and Services Chiefs at Directorate General ISI. A comprehensive briefing was given to military leadership on the regional security issues with special focus on situation of LOC and IOJ&K. CJCS and Services Chiefs appreciated the tireless efforts of ISI for National Security and expressed satisfaction over professional preparedness.

US, Russia expect start of Intra-Afghan talks

The parties agree to meet again in this Trilateral format to discuss the progress made in the intra-Afghan negotiation process

DNA

KABUL: Afghanistan, Russia and the US in a trilateral meeting on Monday "expect that an initial meeting between the negotiating teams must be held immediately to agree on agenda and next steps," Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said in a statement.

The trilateral meeting of Afghanistan, Russia and the US was held via video teleconference on Monday with the participation of the Special Presidential Envoy of the Russian Federation for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, the US peace envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, and Afghanistan's acting foreign minister, Hanif Atmar.

The three countries, reiterating their strong commitment to an Afghan-owned peace process and support for safeguarding Afghanistan's achievements over the past 19 years, agreed as follows: The Russian and the US Governments welcome the Afghan Government's commitment and progress towards releasing of the Taliban prisoners as a necessary step towards early start of the intra-Afghan negotiations. The parties call on the Taliban to reciprocate the Afghan Government's move by releasing all Afghan Government prisoners held by them consistent with their commitment in the Doha Agreement. Recognising the importance of ensuring

a positive atmosphere for the impending negotiations, the parties call for a significant reduction in violence as a confidence-building measure. The Afghan Government's proposal concerning the establishment of a monitoring mechanism for compliance with 'Reduction in Violence (RiV)' measures and to ensure mutual accountability overall through the peace process is a positive contribution. The parties welcome the readiness of both sides to the intra-Afghan negotiations for an early start of the negotiations and expect that an initial meeting between the negotiating teams must be held immediately to agree on agenda and next steps.

Armoured vehicles handed over to KPK police

DNA

ISLAMABAD (DNA) - Armoured vehicles were handed over to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police under the European Union-Funded Pakistan Action to Counter Terrorism (PACT) project. This support will help improve the safety and operational capacity of law enforcement personnel. Law enforcement authorities and judiciary are crucial in the fight against terrorism. That's why the European Union supports PACT KP to train police, prosecutors and judges. PACT supports the efforts of the Government of Pakistan, particularly in KP and Sindh provinces, to strengthen the criminal justice response to combating terrorism.



More than 8 million virus cases worldwide

PARIS: More than 8 million cases of novel coronavirus have been confirmed worldwide, with more than half in the United States and Europe, according to an AFP tally from official sources at 2200 GMT on Tuesday. At least 8,000,202 infections including 435,176 deaths, mostly in Europe, have been registered since the pandemic first emerged in China late last year. Europe has 2,417,902 cases with 188,085 deaths. The USA has 2,110,182 cases and 116,081 deaths. The number of confirmed cases has doubled since May 10 and another one million new cases have been detected in the last eight days. That likely represents only a fraction of the real number of infections because most countries are only testing the most serious cases or only have limited testing capacity. - APP

New Sri Lankan envoy arrives in Islamabad

Newly appointed HC of Sri Lanka to Pakistan has already arrived in Pakistan and assumed charge of duties. Pak and SL enjoy excellent relations and it is hope that during the tenure of the new high commissioner these relations will get further boost



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama has been appointed as the new High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Pakistan. Newly appointed High Commissioner of Sri Lanka

to Pakistan has already arrived in Pakistan and assumed charge of duties. Pakistan and Sri Lanka enjoy excellent relations and it is hope that during the tenure of the new high commissioner these relations will get further boost.

NAB summons Barjees

DNA

LAHORE: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned former federal minister and PML-N MNA Chaudhry Muhammad Barjees Tahir Tuesday. According to sources of NAB, the bureau is investigating the PMLN leaders for assets beyond means. NAB has also written letters to several departments to collect record of Barjees Tahir's assets. On the other hand, Barjees Tahir has approached Lahore High Court (LHC) for pre arrest bail.

Pak reports record corona deaths in 24 hours

ISLAMABAD: The death toll from the virus stands at 2,839 with record 111 deaths reported over the last twenty four hours. With 4,443 new coronavirus cases reported in Pakistan during last 24 hours, the national tally of the cases has jumped to 148,921. 25,015 corona tests were also carried out during this period. According to the latest figures released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), 55,878 coronavirus cases have surfaced in Punjab, 55,581 in Sindh, 18,472 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 8,327 in Balochistan, 8,857 in Islamabad, 1143 in Gilgit Baltistan and 663 cases have been detected in Azad Kashmir, so far. The cases saw a rise in Pakistan after the government upheld the country wise lockdown in May. Since the last two weeks the cases have doubled and are still on the uprise. Government has announced a smart lockdown technique to contain the virus. - APP

Pakistan desires a peaceful Afghanistan: NA Speaker

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that the stable relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan is imperative for the progress and development of both the countries. He said that enhanced bilateral Parliamentary, trade and economic cooperation is the need of the hour. Speaker National Assembly expressed these views in a meeting with Ambassador of Afghanistan who called on him in Islamabad.

The Speaker said that peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan has always been the prime objective of Pakistan's foreign policy. He said that peaceful and prosperous neighborhood was in the interest of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are brotherly neighboring countries intertwined in religious, cultural and historical bonds. He also termed Afghanistan, a gateway to central Asia and can link South with Central Asia. The Speaker emphasized the need for intensifying contacts between the legisla-

tures of both the countries. He suggested for enhancing these contacts through Parliamentary Friendship groups besides establishing contacts between Trade and Commerce Committees of both the Parliaments. Afghan Ambassador thanked Pakistan government for its continued support to the peace process in Afghanistan. He expressed his deep sorrow over the tragic deaths of patients affected by corona in Pakistan and prayed for the early recovery of all those test positive.



Pakistani Chinese language's learners get jobs easily

Sher Jan, hailing from Hunza, a mountainous valley deep in Gilgit-Baltistan, now is working in Abu Dhabi as a site supervisor at a large Chinese corporation. "I enjoy everything from my decision to learn Chinese

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Number of Pakistani, learner of Chinese language get upper hand seeking jobs home and abroad, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. According to the report, since China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) launched in 2015, a growing number of Chinese language learners have emerged in Pakistan. After learning Chinese, many Pakistanis get the upper

hand while looking for jobs. Sher Jan, hailing from Hunza, a mountainous valley deep in Gilgit-Baltistan, now is working in Abu Dhabi as a site supervisor at a large Chinese corporation. "I enjoy everything from my decision to learn Chinese. That not only broadens my cultural vision, but also brings me wealth and respect," he said with a sense of accomplishment. As Sher Jan's hometown Gilgit-Baltistan is the nearest Pakistani region by road to China, taking

geographic advantage, many of his relatives and friends began to explore business opportunities between the two countries. However, they had difficulty communicating with the Chinese people. To surmount the language barrier, Sher Jan decided to learn Chinese and even moved to Islamabad. There he was enrolled at the Confucius Institute in Islamabad in 2014 to learn Chinese systematically. With diligent study, in 2015 Sher Jan was granted a one-year scholarship to study in Beijing Jiaotong

University. After completing the study, he returned to Pakistan to work as a Chinese interpreter at OPPO for two years. In 2018 he got the current job and went to UAE. Data shows that only 437 Pakistanis attended the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) at the Confucius Institute in Islamabad in 2012, while in 2017 the number jumped to 3,659 by a sharp increase over sevenfold. Sher Jan is not an exceptional successful case. Many Pakistanis with Chinese language skill have got satisfactory

job. For instance, Mujeed Hunzai, another student from the Confucius Institute, now is working for a Chinese company supplying water treatment chemicals for CPEC power plants in Pakistan. "The students are playing an important role in Pak-Sino exchanges. They are engaged in all walks of life as translators, interpreters, Chinese language teachers, businessmen, company employees and government officers, etc," said a teacher from the Confucius Institute in Islamabad.

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Saudi Arabia faces perilous Hajj call as virus spikes

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Briefs

Petrol supply continues

MARDAN: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Abid Khan Wazir, Additional Assistant Commissioner Takht Bai Qaiser Khan Tuesday inquired about the presence and price of petrol at petrol pumps in Sher-garh and Lundkhor Bazaar while instructing the manager not to sell petrol in bottles and canisters. Additional Assistant Commissioner Qaiser Khan fined 5 persons for violating Government precautionary measures against shops in view of coronavirus while issuing necessary instructions to shopkeepers to follow the SOPs and in case of violation the shops would be sealed without any delay. — APP

IESCO spends Rs747 mln

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Chief Shahid Iqbal Chaudhary has said that electricity wires passing close or over the house are being shifted to safe locations on the departmental expenditure and so far more than 5000 dangerous points have been secured in all five regions of the company. He said an amount of Rs747.700 million has been spent on shifting of such wires.

Giving the details, he said as many as 509 dangerous points have been secured in Islamabad, 1287 in Rawalpindi, 862 in Attock, 1375 in Jhelum and 1129 in Chakwal circles. The Chief said that the company was utilizing its own resources to protect human life. Shahid Iqbal also requested the customers to follow all safety measures and avoid construction of houses under or close to the power installations i.e. electricity wires, transformers etc. — APP

Punjab govt to restart anti-polio drive

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab government has announced to restart anti-polio vaccination campaign across the province despite the COVID-19 outbreak. According to details, the provincial government has started preparations to launch anti-polio drive in Punjab in the second week of July. In this connection, the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the anti-polio campaign has been finalised, while polio campaign workers will be given training before the start of an anti-polio drive, a private news channel reported. — APP

Federal Minister tests positive

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) leader and Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Syed Aminul Haq tested positive for coronavirus on Tuesday. Haq confirmed he had been suffering from persistent fever for the past one week which had turned into typhoid. The minister said he tested positive for the coronavirus and as soon as he became aware that he was infected, isolated himself. A day earlier, PPP leader Syeda Shehla tested positive for the coronavirus, requesting people to pray for her recovery. In a Twitter post, the PPP minister shared a photo of her test result, adding that she was awaiting for the results of her family members. — APP



ISLAMABAD: A view of thick smoking emitting after a huge fire broke out at Dalda cooking oil and ghee mill located in an area of Kalayam Shareef. According to Rescue 1122 the fire spread quickly and engulfed the entire building and godown which supplies cooking oil and ghee to different areas. — APP

Pakistan to set its own standard for electronics goods: Fawad

Hopefully, standards of locally manufactured cars and tractors would also be upgraded in the next phase, he added. "If we want to achieve progress in the world then we have to develop and adhere to standards", he emphasized

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry Tuesday assured that his ministry was working on a plan to introduce stricter quality standards to prevent the sale of spurious electronic items in country and these standards would be implemented after the Cabinet approval soon. Talking to a private news channel, the minister announced that the government would soon come up with a new policy and mechanism to promote local manufacturing of

electronic items with quality standards for bright future of the country. This will mean that low quality switches and boards would not be imported after implementation of these standards, he mentioned. Fawad said "Only standard electronics products can be sold in Pakistan in coming future". Hopefully, standards of locally manufactured cars and tractors would also be upgraded in the next phase, he added. "If we want to achieve progress in the world then we have to develop and adhere to standards", he emphasized. "We need Industries full cooperation in this

regard as because of their resistance we are now facing some hurdles", he added. The country's Manufacturing Programme was introduced with the aim of boosting local manufacture of electronic and electrical products and increasing the use of locally-produced components, he said. "This new policies will give a decent opportunity for domestic players to gain market share and at the same time, still allowing foreign firms to choose Pakistan as their manufacturing destination. Made in Pakistan dialysis machine would be in markets soon and it is expected to reduce cost of the medical procedure, he

mentioned. The new dialysis machine would provide the hope of affordable treatment to renal patients and neurologists in Pakistan, he highlighted. He said that Pakistani standard goods would meet to international standards and Medical devices standards are now in country working with European standards. Fawad Chaudhry pointed out that when the country's first COVID-19 case was reported in February there was a shortage of such medical equipment and the south Asian nation was not in a position to manufacture it in enough quantities indigenously.

Murad lauds performance of motorway police

ISLAMABAD: The federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed and Secretary for Communications Zafar Hasan pinned the batches to Inspector General, National Highways & Motorway Police, Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam on his promotion to Grade 22, in the rank wearing ceremony held in Ministry of Communications on Monday.



Smart lockdown imposed in areas

PESHAWAR: The district administrations have imposed smart lockdown in some areas of the provincial capital and Swat district in the wake of surge in cases of coronavirus infection. A notification issued from the office of Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar, Muhammad Ali Asghar on Tuesday said that Smart Lockdown has been implemented in Ashrafia Colony, Chinar Road, University Town, Danishabad and Sector E-Two Phase-1 Hayatabad. After imposition of smart lockdown entry and exit points of these areas will

remain closed, the notification said and added only shops of essential food items, medicine, general stores, tandoors and emergency service shops will remain open. Only five people will be allowed to offer congregational prayers in mosques in these areas. Instructions have been issued to the area magistrate and police regarding implementation of smart lockdown and violators will be prosecuted. Another notification issued from the office of Deputy Commissioner Swat notified imposition of smart lockdown. — APP

Chinese plane carrying protective gears arrives

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan received the sixth consignment of protective equipment from China at the Islamabad airport on Tuesday. National Disaster Management Authority Chairperson Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal was present at the airport when the plane arrived. The supplies included 150,000 N-95 masks and 1.5 million surgical masks. Speaking to media with a Chinese envoy, the NDMA chairperson assured that the authority will review the coronavirus situation in Karachi and Peshawar soon and import more than 2,000 beds before July 15. Each of these beds will have an oxygen supply, which the lieutenant general said, is more important than a ventilator at the moment. — APP

PEP Should be Built on Value System

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Economist Mr. Kaiser Bengali emphasized the need to design a public education program built on value system not only for children but also for elderly and other underprivileged groups. Public education campaign that 'children have to be cared for' are important as the parents send children to school because of the value system of the society and not because of any MDGs or SDGs he added. While summing up the discussion at a Virtual meeting on 'Child-Sensitive Budgeting and Role of Parliament' today organized by the Special Committee on Child Rights — CRC of the National Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs he suggested school campuses with 300 to 500 enrollments instead of one-room schools. Children in these schools should be transported from villages near by. He said these schools should be a feeding place and should also have a clinic.

Once it is there parents will definitely send the children to school, as they themselves cannot afford feeding their children or taking care of their health issues. These schools will become center of fulfillment of children's basic needs related to nutrition and health care. The key speakers of the discussion included Hon. Mr. Zain Qureshi Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Finance, Ms. Annabel Gerry Head of DFID, Mr. Haris Gazdar Coordinator to CM Sindh on Social Protection, Economist Mr. Kaiser Bengali, Dr. Abdul Alim Regional Advisor for Social Policy UNICEF, Dr. Mariam Chughtai, Associate Dean & Associate Professor LUMS School of Education, Luis Gorjon Chief Social Policy Unit UNICEF Pakistan. Earlier Honorable MNA Ms. Mehnaz Akber Aziz Convener Special Committee on Child Rights of the Parliamentary Taskforce on SDGs while opening the discussion said that investing in children is a fundamental pre-requisite

to equal rights for girls and boys, to achieve international peace, security and economic development. With in this framework she added parliaments have a unique responsibility; guaranteeing the required human & financial resources for the fulfillment of the rights of every child. She observed that the successive national and provincial budgets have failed to adequately address children's issues such as poverty, health, immunization, malnutrition, education or child protection. She said that the allocations in the budget 2020-2021 are meager for health & education sector. An analysis of budgetary allocations indicates that the total allocation for children specific programs has remained around 0.74% of the total public expenditure of the Federal government in 2017-18 and less than 1.8 % of GDP during the last four years. This makes it imperative for programs, interventions and policies to champion the rights of the child effectively.

Quake jolts KPK & Islamabad

PESHAWAR: A moderate earthquake of 5.7 magnitude on Tuesday morning jolted parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Islamabad. — APP

PTI leader furious over costly COVID-19 testing

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and Member of Sindh Assembly Bilal Ghaffar expressed his annoyance over the costly coronavirus testing in private laboratories of the city. In a statement on Tuesday, the MPA alleged that Karachi's renowned private laboratories have started luring the public in the name of coronavirus test besides citizens are not satisfied with the results of testing of provincial government's run hospitals. Private labs are charging between Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000 for COVID-19 test but these charges are not affordable for middle class families. There is no one to take action against owners of these private laboratories", said Bilal Ghaffar. PTI MPA criticizing Sindh government administration said the provincial government had remain a silent spectator while private laboratories were looting citizens. The poor efficiency of health department compelled people to turn to private labs. He said Sindh Healthcare Commission was not taking any action against those private labs looting citizens. — APP

Money Laundering case adjourned

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad has adjourned the hearing of a case pertaining to money laundering and anti-state activities by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) London leader Altaf Husain and others till June 25. The hearing was adjourned by the court of ATC judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan without any further proceedings.

IRSA releases 294,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 294,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 272,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1452.11 feet, which was 66.11 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 110,200 cusecs and outflow as 135,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1209.85 feet, which was 169.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 48,300 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 181,000, 149,100 and 40,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 71,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 14,500 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. — APP

June 2020
 Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

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 G-8 Markaz, ISLAMABAD-PAKISAN
 Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

ABULALIZADA
 Azerbaijan to continue close Cooperation with Pakistan

Talking lockdowns

PAKISTAN'S Covid crisis story has been one of confusion, uncertainty and a concoction of a flood of conspiracy theories. Which is why the extremely dangerous situation we are facing now is not at all unexpected. We had at least three months to prepare our people against this crisis. Right from March, 2020, when the first cases started emerging in Pakistan, alarm bells sounded with doctors and medical experts issuing warnings; the WHO recommending strict lockdown, and the media also pointing towards an impending crisis.

From the government side there has been lackluster response from the beginning (with only the Sindh government having taken it seriously). The lockdown that the government now says lasted for a month and a half was in fact never really in place. Even before it was lifted formally ahead of Eidul Fitr, people remained on the streets and the quarantine we saw in other countries was never seen. For this, the government must answer. The consequences have been severe. Currently, we have over 145,000 Covid-19 cases in the country, and there have been over 2,700 deaths.

Could we have avoided this outcome? In all probability, yes. The core of the issue lies in the contradictory messages issued by the government and its ministers alike. First, there were reassurances that it is nothing but some sort of flu that is not going to affect many. Then there was reluctance in imposing a lockdown on the pretext of a failing economy, which was declining anyway much before the coronavirus hit the country.

Advisers and ministers were taking it lightly, some even going so far as comparing the casualties in road accidents with corona deaths. Then there were mishandlings at entry points into the country, without proper screening, and then in trying to trace those who had already infected others and disappeared. All this shows a lack of coordination between the various ministries and even the NDMA seemed to lack the required wherewithal to tackle the crisis.

With 4,000 to 6,000 new cases now being reported daily, we see a new round of action from the Punjab government, which follows the 'smart' lockdowns already announced by Imran Khan. Last week, some areas of Islamabad were completely locked down after being identified as coronavirus hotspots.

The National Command and Control Centre has identified hotspots in 20 cities. We still await a final decision and more clarity on how things will move forward from now. Slow decision-making and trepidation in making decisions has been our key downfall. This time around, we can only hope the lockdowns will be effectively imposed and that they will be followed up by widespread testing to identify Covid-19 victims, offer them treatment and isolate those they have been in contact with.

As people continue to die each day in hospitals, and those who live face constant fear, we hope the government will stick to its renewed realization that Covid-19 is indeed a serious problem and that is why it has been treated as an emergency across the 202 countries which have been affected. The policy of 'let's-blame-the-people' cannot work and is a tone-deaf approach to this crisis.

Intra-Afghan talks

IN yet another much-delayed agreement the Afghan government and the Taliban group have agreed that Doha, in Qatar, will be the venue for the first meeting in their peace talks. This will not only be the first intra-Afghan dialogue but will also be the first high-level meeting between the two sides that have been fighting for decades now, without much progress apart from killing each other's thousands of fighters and soldiers.

Though the date for the talks is yet to be finalized, it is anticipated that the first condition of releasing 5,000 Taliban prisoners by the Afghan government needs to be fulfilled before the talks actually take place. The two sides have now to settle their differences on the promised release which may take place in a week or two. The Taliban are still insisting that the prisoner release must be completed before any formal peace talks can begin between the two sides. Though the Kabul government was not part of the deal that the Taliban and the US signed in February this year, the government has already released 3,000 Taliban prisoners.

Now there is new hope to end the war that has raged for nearly two decades, not counting the last 20 years of the previous century that were also consumed by intermittent civil war.

Since the Taliban have been keeping a political office in Doha since 2013, the peace talks are likely to go smoothly there. Afghanistan's warring sides need to take these long-awaited peace talks seriously as a sustainable ceasefire is hardly possible unless a political settlement is reached to end years of conflict in Afghanistan. Both sides need a breakthrough development this time around otherwise the decades long stalemate will continue endlessly. If the two adversaries keep considering each other enemies, peace negotiations are not likely to move ahead. It is sad that the Taliban have been refusing to end hostilities before the talks could begin, and that is one reason the Kabul government was reluctant to release the Taliban prisoners.

Under persistent attacks by the Taliban, the Kabul government relented and started releasing prisoners. In return, the Taliban were also supposed to release one thousand Afghan security personnel being held by the Taliban, of which 600 detainees have been released so far. Unfortunately, in the last one week alone, over 400 government security forces across the country have been killed or injured. One can only hope that the talks are held early and result in the peaceful and practical withdrawal of all American troops, its allies, and coalition partners. All non-diplomatic civilian personnel and private security contractors are also supposed to withdraw from Afghanistan within 14 months.

If that happens, we may then see the Afghan stakeholders try and come to some sort of peace understanding in the country.



Sino-India Border Tensions Intensify

Sajjad Shaukat



India has escalated tensions with Islamabad particularly in the aftermath of the false flag terror attack at Puwama-IOK. In this respect, on February 27, last year, in response to the Indian so-called pre-emptive air strike near the town of Balakot, close to the border with Pakistan's sector of Kashmir, PAF shot down two Indian Air Force (IAF) fighter jets and launched aerial strikes at six targets in the IOK

IN the recent past, India and China held military-level talks to resolve the current border issue in eastern Ladakh peacefully. But, no breakthrough occurred, as on May 5, this year, drastic tensions arose between New Delhi and Beijing, taking both the countries to the edge of war.

In response to India's construction of roads and airstrips adjacent to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which will improve connectivity and enable easier mobility for Indian troops in the area, thousands of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops moved into the regions along the eastern Ladakh border, setting up tents and stationing vehicles and heavy machinery.

Reports confirmed that the Indian army has moved several battalions from an infantry division usually based in the Ladakh city of Leh to "operational alert areas" along the border.

In this connection, Chinese official newspaper Global Times wrote: "The latest border friction was a planned move by New Delhi...India in recent days has illegally constructed defence facilities across the border into Chinese territory in the Galwan Valley region, leaving Chinese border defence troops no other options but making necessary moves in response, and mounting the risk of escalating standoffs and conflicts between the two sides."

Notably, acting upon the August 5 announcement of 2019, Indian central government issued a map on October 31, 2019. In accordance with it, Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two union territories—Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and identifies Pakistani side of Azad Kashmir as well as certain areas of Gilgit-Baltistan as an Indian territory.

Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) had rejected these political maps, which were incompatible with the United Nations maps.

Beijing also snubbed the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories as "unlawful and void", elaborating that India's decision to "include" some of China's territory into its administrative jurisdiction "challenged" Beijing's sovereignty.

India has escalated tensions with Islamabad particularly in the aftermath of the false flag terror attack at Puwama-IOK. In this respect, on February 27, last year, in response to the Indian so-called pre-emptive air strike near the town of Balakot, close to the border with Pakistan's sector of Kashmir, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) shot down two Indian Air Force (IAF) fighter jets and launched aerial strikes at six targets in the IOK.

In fact, as part of anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim policies, PM Modi, the ruling party BJP-led, RSS and VHP are implementing ideology of Hindutva (Hindu Nationalism).

Their various moves such as abrogation of the special status of the Jammu and Kashmir to turn Muslim majority into minority in the Occupied Kashmir (IOK), continued lockdown in the IOK, martyrdom of thousands of the Kashmiris there, introduction of new domicile law against the majority of Kashmiris to completely end any sort of dialogue with Islamabad to settle the Kashmir issue, persecution of religious minorities especially Muslims, anti-Muslim laws-CAA/NRC, assaults on Muslims by the fanatic Hindus, blaming Indian Muslims and Pakistan for spreading coronavirus etc., and intermittent shelling inside Pakistani side of Kashmir in relation to the Line of Control (LoC) might be cited as example.

As regards the India-Nepal confrontation, a new road opened by New Delhi which passes through the disputed territory has roused territorial dispute between the two countries. The link road connects Darchula in the India state of Uttarakhand to the Lipu Lekh pass near the LAC-India's border with China.

India and China have 3,500 kilometers long un-demarcated border which runs along Himalayas. There are three pressure points: the China-Sikkim border, Nepal-India border and the Ladakh region where there is a lake and river.

Indian media reports suggest that India has lost hundreds of square kilometers of area and it is being dubbed as 'second Kargil'.

Meanwhile, recently, India's Home Minister Shri Amit Shah threatened of conducting air and surgical strikes inside Pakistani territory.

Reacting to Amit Shah's statement, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi stated: "Let me make it clear to Amit Shah that if India made the mistake, we will give a befitting response...Amit Shah should tell...Why does India not launch a surgical strike on Laddakh?...India has reached the extreme in committing atrocities in Kashmir...India wants to sabotage the Afghan peace process...New Delhi is threatening Pakistan to divert attention from its internal situation".

Earlier, the DG of ISPR Maj-Gen. Babar Iftikhar said: "Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa warned India...[saying] We will respond any aggression with full might...Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief of Army have said that India was planning false flag operation... India faced great humiliation in the recent military standoff with China...faced embarrassment in map issues with

Nepal as well...India is facing many internal challenges especially after the emergence of coronavirus...many issues have emerged in India after the August 5, 2019 move, which revoked the special status of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir...There is an emergence of Islamophobia in India. Now they [India] think the best way is to divert the attention towards Pakistan...The situation on the LoC...1229 ceasefire violations by India have been committed since start of this year...while their quadcopters have also violated airspace [of Pakistan] on different occasions".

As a matter of fact, fast growing economic power of China coupled with her rising strategic relationship with the Third World has irked the eyes of Indians. Nepal has become another target of the Indian hegemonic designs in South Asia, as it has developed cordial relationship with Beijing, while New Delhi's endeavor to alienate Nepal from China has failed.

It is worth-mentioning that China's increasingly closer ties with Pakistan and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is part of China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) or China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has openly been opposed by India which is trying to sabotage this project, as recent terror-attacks, sponsored by Indian RAW in Pakistan and Balochistan province have shown. As part of the new cold war with China, America has also opposed the CPEC. Hence, Washington is supporting Indian illegitimate stand in connection with present border tensions with China.

Nevertheless, border tensions in Ladakh also occurred between New Delhi and Beijing in 2014. The standoff was resolved after three weeks.

Notably, the two countries also fought a brief war in 1962, which China won.

In 2017, India and China were engaged in a similar stand-off lasting more than two months in Doklam plateau, a tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan. The situation was later defused through diplomatic channels.

Nonetheless, unlike the past, this time, Sino-India border tensions have intensified. If it is not resolved through negotiations, it could result into a conventional war which may culminate into nuclear war. Same is the case of Kashmir which remains a nuclear flashpoint and New Delhi is following aggressive strategy against Pakistan.

(Sajjad Shaukat writes on international affairs and is author of the book: US vs Islamic Militants, Invisible Balance of Power: Dangerous Shift in International Relations)

Email: sajjad_logic@yahoo.com

Less Blood Donation: A catastrophe for those in need!

Khalid Bin Majeed



Blood shortage has put the state health authorities on tenterhooks and governments across the world are urging their people - through coordinated campaigns in the print, electronic, and social media - to rise to the challenge and line up for blood donation. In Pakistan too blood banks and centers are facing a serious shortage of blood, as donations have troughed significantly due to the low turnout of voluntary non-remunerated blood donors

THE international community is today celebrating the World Blood Donor Day 2020 at a time when the novel coronavirus disease COVID-19 has thrown the entire world a curve ball with its gory tentacles - anchored deep down in the earth - feeding on more and more victims and bleeding the state coffers. Never before in the last 100 years has the world had to deal with a disaster/calamity of such magnitude.

Scientists, geneticists, and microbiologists are burning the midnight oil and racing against time in their efforts to find a cure to neutralize the pandemic for good. This smart RNA virus however has outsmarted and outwitted the scientists so far.

In addition to affecting and killing people and overburdening even the strongest economies, the novel coronavirus has seriously dented the global health system, with blood shortage threatening to kill more people, especially those suffering from leukemia, Thalassemia, hemophilia, sickle cell anemia or those undergoing critical surgeries.

Blood shortage has put the state health authorities on tenterhooks and governments across the world are urging their people - through coordinated campaigns in the print, electronic, and social media - to rise to the challenge and line up for blood donation. In Pakistan too blood banks and centers are facing a serious shortage of blood, as donations have troughed significantly due to the low turnout of voluntary non-remunerated blood donors. Majority of donors fear that they might contract the virus if they ventured out of the safety of their home, or that they might catch it during the transfusion process. This situation has put the health professionals in a dilemma. Like its competitors, the Regional Blood Donation Centre (IRBDC) of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has also been working overtime since the outbreak of the pandemic to cater to the needs of Thalassemia, Hemophilia, cancer, and dialysis patients. Educational institutions and industrial units

were the major source of blood collection for the Centre, and their closure since the outbreak of pandemic has impacted on blood donations. This situation has toughened the Center's task to search for the potential donors.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, renowned humanitarian, philanthropist and showbiz celebrity Mr. Abrar Ul Haq soon after assuming the charge as Chairman PRCS in December last year made a fervent appeal to the nation - through the social, print, and electronic media - not to let the pandemic keep them from donating blood for the critically ill patients.

Mr. Haq also toured the provincial capitals and motivated people through the print, electronic, and social media to look up to their glorious tradition of making a beeline for blood donations whenever a natural or manmade disaster befell the country.

It was due to his sincere efforts and charisma that people started visiting the Regional Blood Donor Centre to donate blood. However, the frequency of the donors needs to be increased to ensure an uninterrupted supply of blood for the critically ill patients.

In addition to making a clarion call to the nation, PRCS also roped in the parliamentarians from different political parties in the nationwide blood campaign. With the assistance and cooperation of Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Suri, the RBDC arranged a blood donation camp at the Parliament House where parliamentarians from across the political divide not only donated blood, but also motivated the public to follow the suit.

Since the demand overstretched the supply, the PRCS Regional Blood Donor Centre team whipped up the blood donation campaign and set up camps at different locations in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The Centre arranged 11 camps in January, 9 camps in February, and five in March collecting a total of 1,197 units. The Centre also arranged 15 camps at different locations in the twin cities in April and collected 560 units, including 187 units from the

walk-in donors.

The highest number of 171 units came from the Islamabad Police. Inspector General of Islamabad Police (IGP) Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar Khan took special interest in the PRCS blood collection campaign and directed his force to ensure their participation in this national cause and wholeheartedly donate blood for those needing it the most.

The PRCS volunteers are also working selflessly round the clock to ensure availability of blood for the patients and contributing in the blood campaign through their precious blood donations. Their passion and motivation is precious asset to PRCS.

In addition to these measures, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society also joined hands with the Uber Pakistan to facilitate the blood collections, under the partnership the Uber Pakistan gave 5,000 free promo codes to the PRCS, which are being used by the voluntary non-remunerated blood donors to visit to and from the Regional Blood Donor Centre for blood donation.

However, despite all these indefatigable efforts, the results do not match the expectations, as the fear of catching coronavirus still hounds the potential blood donors. This situation demands serious state intervention and a passionate appeal by Prime Minister Imran Khan, parliamentarians, celebrities and Ulema belonging to all schools of thought. Their combined efforts would definitely bring good results.

Safe blood is critical both for treatments and urgent interventions and its adequate and reliable supply is the need of the hour, which could only be ensured by a stable base of regular, voluntary non-remunerated donors. In order to increase blood donations, the government should launch a public awareness campaign in the print and electronic media to dispel fears among the donors about safety of the transfusion process by educating them on the standard safety protocols adopted by the blood banks and centers. Time is of the essence and the government should rise to the occasion the sooner the better.

Briefs

Beijing virus situation "extremely severe"

BEIJING: Beijing's coronavirus situation is "extremely severe", a city official warned Tuesday, as 27 new infections were reported in the Chinese capital from a cluster has sparked a huge trace-and-test programme. The coronavirus resurgence - believed to have started at the city's sprawling Xinfadi wholesale food market - has prompted alarm as China had largely brought its outbreak under control through mass testing and draconian lock downs imposed earlier in the year. The new cases took the number of confirmed infections in Beijing over the past five days to 106, as authorities locked down almost 30 communities in the city and tested tens of thousands of people. China had eased much of its anti-coronavirus measures in recent months as the government all but declared victory against the disease that emerged in Wuhan late last year. The epidemic situation in the capital is extremely severe; Beijing city spokesman Xu Hejian warned at a press conference. The World Health Organization had already expressed concern about the cluster, pointing to Beijing's size and connectivity. - APP

US police face calls on screening recruits

MINNEAPOLIS: As he watched the video of George Floyd's dying moments, martial arts instructor Andre Balian recognized the white police officer kneeling on the black man's neck for nearly nine minutes. "There's no perceivable way that he could not know what kind of damage he was either doing or capable of doing in that situation," Balian said of Derek Chauvin, the now ex-officer who has been charged with murdering Floyd in Minneapolis. "A knee on someone's neck that's on the ground could be like a killing blow if it's applied with a harsh amount of force. "He knew what he was doing and that it was wrong, and they better not let him off the hook for it," said Balian, who still teaches at the Southern Praying Mantis Kung Fu Association where he encountered Chauvin two decades ago. Chauvin, who spent 19 years on the Minneapolis force before being sacked over Floyd's killing, racked up 17 complaints during his career, including one when he yanked a woman from her car for a minor speeding offense. While Balian was shocked to watch the video of Floyd's death on May 25, he recalled his unease about Chauvin as a student, describing him as a "jerk" who would stand with arms folded and glare at those around him. James Butcher, an expert in psychological screening exams for aspiring police officers, said anyone capable of such violence should never have been recruited in the first place. - APP

UN to help feed Libyan refugees

TRIPOLI: The UN refugee agency and the World Food Programme announced Tuesday a joint initiative to feed up to 10,000 refugees and asylum seekers trapped in war-torn Libya amid the coronavirus pandemic. "The partnership was launched in recognition of the severe socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Libya as well as the effects of the ongoing conflict," UNHCR and WFP said in a statement. The first distribution of food began on Monday in the Sarraj neighbourhood of Tripoli. Tens of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as sub-Saharan African and Asian migrants hoping to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, are stranded in Libya. - APP

Saudi Arabia faces perilous Hajj call as virus spikes

The Hajj, a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lifetime, represents a major potential source of contagion as it packs millions of pilgrims into congested religious sites

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is expected to scale back or call off this year's Hajj pilgrimage for the first time in its modern history, observers say, a perilous decision as coronavirus cases spike. Muslim nations are pressing Riyadh to give its much-delayed decision on whether the annual Hajj will go ahead as scheduled in late July. But as the kingdom negotiates a call fraught with political and economic risks in a tinderbox region, time is running out to organise logistics for one of the world's largest mass gatherings.

A full-scale Hajj, which last year drew about 2.5 million pilgrims, appears increasingly unlikely after authorities advised Muslims in late March to defer preparations due to the fast-spreading disease. "It's a toss-up between holding a nominal hajj and scrapping it entirely," a South Asian official in contact with Saudi Hajj authorities told media. A Saudi official told media: "The decision will soon be made and announced." Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, withdrew from the pilgrimage this month after pressing Riyadh for clarity, with

a minister calling it a "very bitter and difficult decision". Malaysia, Senegal and Singapore followed suit with similar announcements. Many other countries with Muslim populations, from Egypt and Morocco to Turkey, Lebanon and Bulgaria, have said they are still awaiting Riyadh's decision. In countries like France, faith leaders have urged Muslims to "postpone" their pilgrimage plans until next year due to the prevailing risks. The Hajj, a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lifetime, represents a major potential source of con-

tagion as it packs millions of pilgrims into congested religious sites. But any decision to limit or cancel the event risks annoying Muslim hardliners for whom religion trumps health concerns. It could also trigger renewed scrutiny of the Saudi custodianship of Islam's holiest sites, the kingdom's most powerful source of political legitimacy. The kingdom is "buying time" as it treads cautiously, the South Asian official said. "At the last minute if Saudi says 'we are ready to do a full Hajj', (logistically) many countries will not be in a position" to participate,

he said. Amid an ongoing suspension of international flights, a reduced Hajj with only local residents is a likely scenario, the official added. A decision to cancel the Hajj would be a first since the kingdom was founded in 1932. Saudi Arabia managed to hold the pilgrimage during previous outbreaks of Ebola and MERS. But it is struggling to contain the virus amid a serious spike in daily cases and deaths since authorities began easing a nationwide lockdown in late May. In Saudi hospitals, sources say intensive care beds are fast filling up and a growing

number of health workers are contracting the virus as the total number of cases has topped 130,000. Deaths surpassed 1,000 on Monday. To counter the spike, authorities this month tightened lockdown restrictions in the city of Jeddah, gateway to the pilgrimage city of Makkah. "The Hajj is the most important spiritual journey in the life of any Muslim, but if Saudi Arabia proceeds in this scenario it will not only exert pressure on its own health system," said Yasmine Farouk from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. - APP

T20 World Cup plans 'unrealistic'

SYDNEY: Staging the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia this year is "unrealistic" in the midst of a global coronavirus pandemic, Cricket Australia chairman Earl Eddings admitted Tuesday. The tournament is scheduled to take place from October 18 to November 15, and officials have previously said they are planning for it to proceed on those dates. But with many global borders still shut due to virus-related travel restrictions, Eddings conceded that was looking increasingly unlikely. "While it hasn't been formally called off this year, or postponed, trying to get 16 countries into Australia in the current world, where most countries are still going through COVID spiking, I think it's unrealistic, or it's going to be very, very difficult," he told reporters. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Afghanistan Mashaal Atif meeting with UNHCR representatives to discuss Afghan refugees issues. - DNA

US to resume federal executions after 17 years

WASHINGTON: The United States will resume federal executions on July 13, after a 17-year stay, the Justice Department said Monday. There have been just three federal executions since the death penalty was reinstated by the US government in 1988. Attorney General Bill Barr announced a year ago he intended to resume the use of the death penalty for federal crimes. Five convicted murderers were scheduled to undergo lethal injections in December 2019 and January of this year at the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana. But at the last minute, the US Supreme Court refused to lift a stay on federal executions, saying that - "in light of what is at stake" - the block on executions should be reviewed by an appeals court. In April, an appeals court in Washington approved the use of pentobarbital for lethal injections, and Barr ordered that new execution dates be set for four of the

five convicts. "We owe it to the victims of these horrific crimes," Barr said in a statement. Following his order, the Bureau of Prisons scheduled the executions to take place between July 13 and August 28. Among the four is Daniel Lewis Lee, an avowed white supremacist, who was sentenced to death for the 1996 murder of a family of three, including an eight-year-old girl. The mother of one of his victims, Earlene Peterson, opposes Lee's execution due to her religious convictions and appealed to US President Donald Trump to grant Lee clemency. "I can't see how executing Daniel Lee will honor my daughter in any way," Peterson said in a video posted online. "In fact, kind of like it dirties her name because she wouldn't want it and I don't want it." Trump, who is a fervent advocate of the death penalty and has even said it should be applied against drug dealers, did not grant her appeal. - APP

New Zealand reports fresh corona cases

The South Pacific nation, which has recorded only 22 deaths among a population of five million, declared last week it had eliminated community COVID-19 transmission

WELLINGTON: New Zealand reported its first new cases of coronavirus in almost a month on Tuesday when two recent arrivals from Britain tested positive after being released early from quarantine to visit a dying relative. The South Pacific nation, which has recorded only 22 deaths among a population of five million, declared last week it had eliminated community COVID-19 transmission, allowing it to relax social distancing measures and rely on strict border controls. One of the two women, who travelled from Britain via Doha and Brisbane, showed mild symptoms after landing at Auckland airport on June 7, but her symptoms were ascribed to a pre-existing condition, local media reported. The pair were allowed to leave two-week isolation early on June 13 on compassionate grounds and drove by car to Wellington, making contact with no one on

the way, health department director-general Ashley Bloomfield said. He said they tested positive after arriving in Wellington and were in isolation, along with the only relative they had contact with in the capital. Officials immediately began tracking anyone that came in contact with the pair, aged in their 30s and 40s. Bloomfield said he was not fearful the cases could lead to a fresh outbreak because systems were in place to trace their movements. "A new case is something we hoped we wouldn't get, but it's also something we expected and have planned for," he told reporters. Contact tracing teams were testing air crews and passengers, airport staffers, and hotel employees to ensure they were COVID-free. He said that as a result of the case rules had been tightened to ensure people were only allowed out of quarantine on compassionate grounds

after testing negative. New Zealand's borders are open only to returning Kiwis and their families, besides some exceptions for business and compassionate grounds. Travellers must undergo two weeks mandatory quarantine, unless granted special permission. The country declared last week that it had eliminated community transmission of COVID-19. As a result, domestic restrictions including social distancing requirements and limits on public gatherings were lifted, although strict border controls remain. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Monday she had not declared the country virus-free because "New Zealand will have cases again in the future". "Of course, our hope and expectation is that should be at the border... if they've quarantined, of course, that's a very different story than in the community". - APP

Ukraine's first lady hospitalised

KIEV: Ukraine's first lady Olena Zelenska, who last week tested positive for the coronavirus, has been hospitalised with pneumonia, the presidency said on Tuesday. Zelenska, 42, has been diagnosed with double pneumonia, the presidency said, adding that oxygen treatment was not required. "Her condition is stable," it said in a statement. Zelenska said on Friday she had tested positive for the coronavirus, while her husband, President Volodymyr Zelensky, and their two children had tested negative. Zelensky's spokeswoman Yuliya Mendel said the 42-year-old leader was "feeling well" and being tested for coronavirus "every single day". "All his results are negative", she told media. - APP

Cricket Australia chief resigns

SYDNEY: Cricket Australia chief executive Kevin Roberts resigned Tuesday after the troubled organisation's board demanded a leadership "reset" as anger simmers over its handling of the coronavirus crisis. Roberts' departure makes him the third Australian sporting chief to fall on his sword during the pandemic, after Rugby Australia's Raelene Castle and the National Rugby League's Todd Greenberg. CA chairman Earl Eddings said T20 World Cup chief Nick Hockley would take over from Roberts on an interim basis while an international search was conducted for a permanent replacement. "Kevin feels, and the board

agrees, that now's the right time for new leadership at Cricket Australia to reset the organisation to bounce back from COVID-19," Eddings told reporters. Eddings refused to detail why Roberts was heading for the exit barely halfway through his three-year contract. However, former Australian wicketkeeper Ian Healy said Roberts had lost the confidence of those involved in the game by over-reacting to the financial risks posed by the virus. "He's led a panic, a very premature panic, on the pandemic for no great reason and no reason he's been able to explain transparently to the states and the players," Healy told Melbourne's SEN radio. - APP

NAB's effective prevention strategy appreciated

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review NAB's awareness and Prevention Policy at NAB headquarters. He has said that NAB's Awareness and Prevention Strategy was appreciated by World Economic Forum and Transparency International Pakistan besides other reputed national organizations in order to aware people through media about the ill effects of corruption which is remarkable achievement. NAB will continue its effective Awareness and Prevention campaign with more dedication, devotion and commitment in future. The Chairman NAB said that NAB is mandated to carry out Awareness and Prevention functions against corruption in pur-

sance of Section 33C of National Accountability Ordinance (NAO). Under NAB's Awareness and Prevention effective campaign across the country, NAB has been engaging different Governmental, Non-Governmental Organizations, media, Civil Society and other segments of society in order to aware people about the ill effects of corruption. He said as per excellent feedback received and appreciation of reputed national and international organizations, various segments of society, NAB's Awareness campaign on "NAB's Faith-Corruption free Pakistan" had been effectively highlighted in print, electronic and social media throughout the country. He said that the present management of NAB has taken various measures including effective Awareness

and Prevention Campaign to aware people about the ill effects of corruption. The detail is as under: A. Due to NAB's efforts, on all ATM machines of all scheduled Banks carry NAB's message across the country in order to aware people about the ill effects of corruption. B. NAB and Higher Education Commission (HEC)

have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for creating awareness amongst the students of various Universities and Colleges. Due to this collaboration, over 50 thousands Character Building Societies (CBS) have been established in various Universities/Colleges across the country so that students may be aware about the ill effects of corruption

at an early age. C. NAB, SNGPL, IESCO, LESCO, GEPCO, FESCO and K-Electric joint hands to print NAB's message from their platform in order to disseminate awareness about the ill effects of corruption. IESCO and other organizations have started printing NAB message "Say No to Corruption" on electricity bills and Gas bills. D. NAB, in collaboration

with Islamabad Traffic Police has started printing 2.4 million NAB message on all driving licenses. E. NAB in Collaboration with PTA has disseminated NAB message to all mobile phone subscribers across the country through different mobile phone companies at the eve of International Anti-Corruption Day in order to aware people belong to all segments of society about the ill effects of corruption. F. NAB in Collaboration with Pakistan Film Censor Board continuously aired NAB's video message in all Cinema Houses of the country. NAB's this initiative has been appreciated by the public at large. G. NAB's message is being printed on all government tenders issued for publication in newspapers in Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan which will be expanded to other provinces accordingly.

High-level conference on Belt & Road

BEIJING: A high-level video conference on Belt and Road international cooperation will be held on Thursday, with the theme of "strengthening the Belt and Road international cooperation and jointly fighting COVID-19," foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian announced Tuesday. The meeting will be presided over by Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Foreign ministers or ministerial officials from 25 countries will attend, along with senior officials from the United Nations and the World Health Organization. The meeting, jointly organized by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Commerce and the National Health Commission. - APP

